

# THE שקל SHEKEL



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**DAVID HENDIN PUBLISHES**



**GUIDE TO BIBLICAL COINS, 6<sup>TH</sup> EDITION**



**FEATURING:**

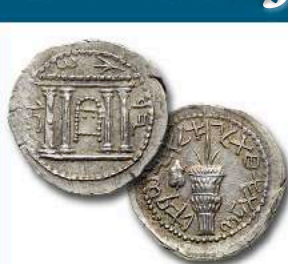
AN EGYPTIAN KARAITE MEDAL COMMEMORATING THE MOUSSA DAR'I  
SYNAGOGUE by Ira Rezak

REFLECTIONS ON COLLECTING FOR 50 YEARS, PART I by Aaron Oppenheim

2021 JEWISH-AMERICAN HALL OF FAME MEDALS by Mel Wacks

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# THE SHEKEL

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am writing this at the beginning of Hanukkah. Most people think of Hanukkah as Hag Ha'Urim, the Festival of Lights, but it literally means Dedication or Re-dedication, referring to the cleansing of the Temple in Jerusalem. Where I live near Washington, D.C., coin shows are starting up and coin clubs are starting to meet in person again. Hopefully, this is the tail end of the pandemic, and we can rededicate ourselves to our hobby (or one of our hobbies).

We have had several successful talks online, and I'm expecting to keep that going, perhaps quarterly.

Anyone who knows me knows that, in addition to my Israel and Judaica specialties, I collect numismatic items portraying felines. Therefore, I was especially thrilled to see the new anniversary coins from Israel with not only a leopard, but also a caracal (there's also a sea turtle, but I leave that collecting specialty for others). Several of Israel's coins and medals portray lions. The leopard was on the Biblical wildlife coins of 1994 and a wildlife medal (SM124) back in 1990. This is the first time a caracal has shown up on Israel's coins or medals, though both a caracal and a leopard were portrayed on Israel phone cards. Unfortunately, there are several other countries that have already placed a caracal on their coins, and one also appears on the Ethiopian 5-birr banknote. And Israel issued a new lion coin this year, the 25<sup>th</sup> Biblical art coin, showing the lion throne of King Solomon, as described in I Kings 10:19-20. All these coins are still available from the Israel Coins and Medals Corporation.

Many newcomers to numismatics find the variety of Israel coins and medals daunting. Back in the heyday of Israel numismatics, the late sixties and seventies, someone could quickly assemble a complete set of coins and medals. Now it would take concerted effort and a big budget. That's why it makes sense to collect Israel coins and/or medals by topic. One can complete a set within a reasonable period of time and budget, then either expand the original topic or add a new topic.

Happy Collecting!  
Simcha Kuritzky

## AN EGYPTIAN KARAITE MEDAL COMMEMORATING THE MOUSSA DAR'I SYNAGOGUE IN CAIRO

by Ira Rezak

Medals directly related to and illustrative of Jewish houses of worship, their construction, dedication, and round-numbered anniversaries, are not uncommon. Indeed, medals of synagogue-associated schools, building-fund efforts, and related honorifics and awards are even more numerous, adding considerably to the corpus of extant synagogal related numismatics.

Needless to say, virtually all such items are associated with institutions linked to traditional Rabbinic Judaism, the creed that developed in the aftermath of the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, and which corresponds to the common understanding of what the word Judaism generally connotes today.

Karaism, a Jewish religious movement that began in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE and repudiated oral tradition, is not typically considered a valid branch of Judaism today. Therefore, the appearance of a medal commemorating and actually depicting an explicitly Karaite synagogue is noteworthy, even if it is a rather modest object.

The medal in question is 26 mm in diameter and has an intrinsic loop; presumably it was designed either to be worn openly by its recipients, or else carried as an attachment to some personal item, such as a watch or keychain. It was probably distributed to members and supporters of the community at the celebration of the synagogue's twenty-fifth anniversary.

Continued



اليوبيل الفضي لكتيبة موسى الدرعي لطائفه الاسرائيليين القرانين بمصر ١٩٥٤-١٩٢٦

Al yoobil al Fidi lekanisaht mossa al darie le taefat al israeleen al Karaneen be misr (Transliteration)

1926-1954 The Silver Jubilee of the Musa Al-Der'i Church of the Congregation of the Karaim in Egypt (translation)

The obverse side of the medal depicts the exterior of the synagogal edifice which features four corner towers, each surmounted by four vertical projections in an imitation of biblical horned altars. The surrounding Hebrew inscription is:

יובל התרפה-התשיד בי' הכ ר' משה דרעי קקק במצרים

the translation of which is: "The Jubilee 5688 (1928) – 5714 (1954) of the Synagogue R(abbi) Moshe Dar'i of the Holy Community in Egypt."

The reverse side shows a stylized image of the Tablets of the Law surmounted by a radiant Star of David and surrounded by a wreath of olive branches; the conventional Hebrew abbreviations of the Ten Commandments inscribed on the Tablets are absent, replaced by ten horizontal lines. The circular inscription is entirely in Arabic characters with the dates 1926-1954 at the top of the reverse. The principal Arabic text, transliterated, is "*Al yoobil al fidi lekanisaht mossa al darie le taefat al israeleen al karaneen be misr*" and translated, is "1926-1954 The Silver Jubilee of the Musa Al-Dar'i Church of the Congregation of the Karaim in Egypt".

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Jubilees are conventionally round-numbered anniversaries which in this case would normally be a twenty-five-year period. Obviously, neither the twenty-six-year spread of the pair of dates in Hebrew nor the twenty-eight-year spread in the Arabic precisely equals twenty-five years. This discrepancy likely relates to different dates considered to have marked the start of the synagogue's development. Since we know that the building was not actually completed until 1932 it seems likely that various points in the synagogue's planning, funding and construction phases may have been considered by the medal's patrons as alternative starting dates.

As it was mentioned earlier, Karaite Judaism accepts only those laws and commandments that are detailed in the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible, as a basis for their halakhic, or obligatory, religious practice. This contrasts sharply with rabbinic Jewish practice in which the rulings of subsequent rabbis whose rulings as recorded in the Mishnah, the Talmud and subsequent responsa, as well as the many customs accumulated over the past two thousand years, are also considered authoritative. Rabbinic Judaism greatly respects Biblical law of course, but it incorporates many modifications and extensions of its rules. While there were differences of opinion about the relative authority of the written law (the Bible) as compared to the so-called oral tradition (the Mishnah and Talmud) even in ancient times, it was during the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE that Karaite Jews are believed to have clearly separated from Rabbinic Judaism, initially in Iraq.

Subsequently, distinct Karaitic communities existed in Iraq, Egypt, Jerusalem, the Crimea, and in Lithuanian lands of Eastern Europe, and they continue to exist to the present day in several of these areas as well as in Israel and the United States. Despite the distinctions of religious authority and consequently of practice as alluded to above, Rabbinic and Karaite Jews have for the most part co-existed amicably, with individuals able to transfer readily from one form of Judaism to the other in many communities. In fact, when Abraham Maimonides, son of the Rambam, was the Nagid, otherwise known as the head of the community in Cairo in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century CE, he accepted large numbers of Karaites back into his Rabbinite kehillah, or congregation. However, while the State of Israel



*Continued*

today accepts Karaites as Jews from a legal point of view, the current Israeli rabbinate does not consider them to be members of the Jewish faith.

Moussa Ben Abraham ben Sa'adia HaRofe Dar'i, in whose honor the synagogue celebrated on this medal is named, may well have been a convert to Karaism. His family originated in Spain and undoubtedly followed Rabbinic Jewish practice before moving to Dar'aa in Morocco, the obvious source of Dar'i, Moussa's family name. Moussa himself seems to have been born in Alexandria, Egypt or else to have relocated there, and is believed to have been a covert to Karaite Judaism in his youth. He flourished in Fatamid Egypt during the 13<sup>th</sup> century and, though his dates of birth and death are uncertain, there is apparent reason to believe that the date of completion of one of his literary compendia is 1263 CE. A physician by profession, as his name indicates and as both his father and grandfather were, he is best known as a prolific poet of liturgical piyyutim as well as of Andalusian style secular poems and songs referencing love and wine comparable to those of his Spanish predecessors, Shlomo Ibn Gavirol and Yehuda Halevi.

In addition, he composed lamentations, riddles, even bilingual poems in Hebrew and Arabic. He is considered to be the foremost medieval Karaite poet with some five hundred of his works still known, many being re-published and subjects of analysis in the present day. His career brought him to Cairo where he lived most of his life and where he practiced medicine, though he is known to have also traveled to Jerusalem and to Damascus. According to the late Rabbi Leon J. Weinberger, of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, a professor at the University there and the most prominent editor and biographer of Dar'i, the poet was the product of both Arab courtly tradition and of Jewish heritage, so that his extensive writings reflect both the tensions between, and the blending of, these disparate cultures.

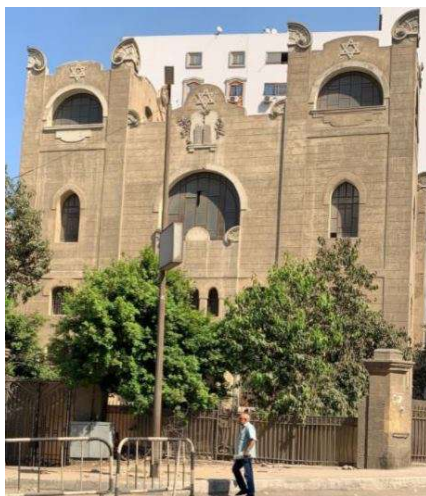
In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Cairene Karaites were predominantly merchants, some of them very wealthy. In 1917, at a time when Egyptian Jewry numbered some 50,000, it is estimated that Karaites represented a quarter of that total and lived mainly in Cairo. Culturally, they were closer to Muslim social traditions than to those of the more internationally oriented Rabbinate

*Continued*

Jews. The spoken and written language of Karaites in Egypt was Arabic, whereas the lingua franca of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Egyptian Rabbinites was typically French, Italian or English. Indeed, Karaites saw themselves, by and large, as culturally Egyptian—often they were nationalistic loyalists and non-Zionists.

In 1948, with the declaration of the State of Israel and the consequent war with Egypt, a large proportion of the Rabinite Jewish population emigrated to Israel, but the majority of Karaites, at least 5,000, remained. It was not until the aftermath of the 1956 Israeli-Egyptian Sinai War that virtually all Karaites and the remnant of Rabinite Jews left the country.

In the 1920s, though the historic Rav Simcha synagogue still survived in the old Jewish Karaite quarter of Cairo, many Karaites moved to a more modern neighborhood called Abbasiyah and began construction of a new, larger and more modern edifice there. This is the synagogue commemorated on the Jubilee medal.



The exterior of the Karaite synagogue

Construction began in the mid-1920s, but the synagogue was actually completed and fully available to the community only in 1932. It's imposing

*Continued*

exterior form is distinctive, having four towers at its corners, each in turn displaying curved projections, so-called “horns” at their own corners. This form of architectural decoration reflects both the biblical descriptions of horned altars and ancient altars that have been excavated in Israel; it also serves to reflect the Karaite commitment to ancient biblical as opposed to the rabbinic tradition.



The interior of the Karaite synagogue



Dar'i window



Dar'i ark

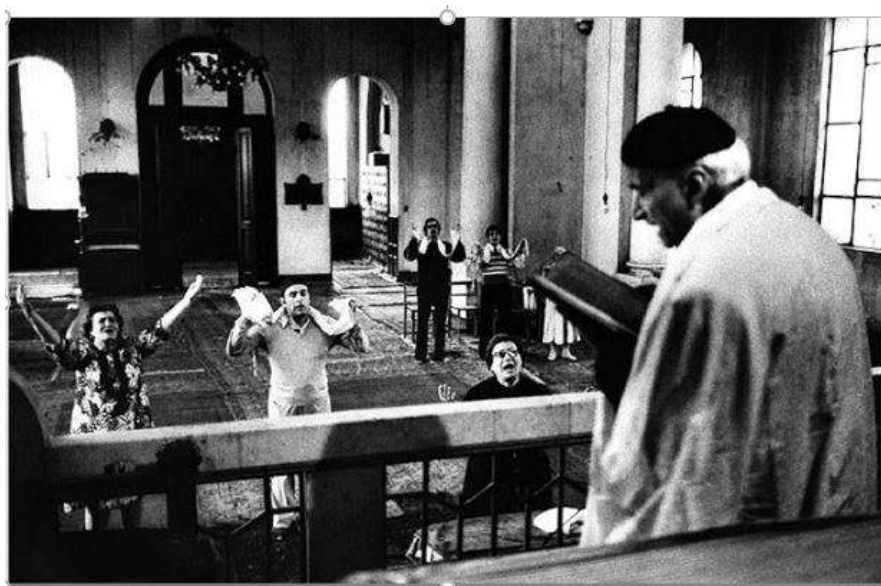


Dar'i tik (Torah container)

The interior is open, lacking pews, and seems to be oriented north rather than east, toward Jerusalem. With an eclectic style including chandeliers hanging from a domed roof, the prayer space more closely resembles the

*Continued*

structure of a mosque than that of most synagogues which typically feature a centrally placed reader's platform and provide fixed seating for worshipers. Such resemblance, again, reflects the assimilation of Karaite custom to that of their surroundings.



Prayer service in Dar'i synagogue

As noted above, the jubilee medal for this impressive communal center was issued in 1954, only two years before the massive exodus of the community in 1956-57. For many years thereafter, the building was abandoned, and its interior space fell into a state of disrepair. In recent years, however, the Egyptian government has subsidized the renovation of many historical sites in Cairo, among them both the al Dar'i synagogue and two extant Karaite cemeteries.

In 1978, a visitor to the Dar'i synagogue re-discovered a remarkable manuscript that had been in possession of the Karaites of Cairo for nearly 1,000 years. A significant fragment of the Hebrew Bible with a colophon naming its scribe as Moshe ben Asher, the famous Masorete of Tiberias,

*Continued*

and 895 CE as the date for the completion of this manuscript. While this fragment may, in fact, have been copied some years later, it is undoubtedly one of the oldest existing datable Hebrew Bibles. Maimonides is believed by many to have studied this very codex when it was still intact and declared it to be the most reliable copy of the biblical text and therefore the one upon which all subsequent copies of Torah were to rely. This codex has had a tortuous and contentious subsequent history, but it was eventually brought to Jerusalem in the 1980s where it currently resides.



The codex

At least since the 9<sup>th</sup> century CE, Cairo was the site of a Karaite Jewish community that, while never as numerous, long existed harmoniously alongside the dominant Rabbinite congregation. After the 1956 conflict between Israel and Egypt both communities emigrated with the result that today there are virtually no Karaites, and mere handful of Jews of any type remaining in Cairo.

The future of the synagogue named for Moshe Dar'i will probably be converted into a government-supported museum space; one of its goals is very likely to be the culture of converts to and from the Karaite community. ☞

## NEW GOLD BULLION COIN: MAHANE YEHUDA MARKET

11th in the “Jerusalem of Gold” Bullion Coin Series

*Courtesy of [en.israelmint.com](http://en.israelmint.com)*

The 2021 Bullion Coin spotlights Mahane Yehuda Market, Jerusalem's largest and most interesting market, located in the center of the city. The coin's vibrant design aptly depicts the market - a bustling center, alive from early morning until night, in its unique Jerusalem setting.

Thousands visit the market every day - people of all ages who come with their baskets to buy or just to have fun, as well as tourists from all over the globe. All enjoy a unique Jerusalem experience, shopping and tasting the famous Hummus of Jerusalem (a chickpea spread), Tehina (ground sesame seeds), Halva (sweet Tehina) and other delicacies. The array of colors and fragrance of the spices together with the energetic shouts of the stallholders contribute to the market's special atmosphere.

Originally established at the end of the 19th century in the Ottoman period and developed during the British Mandate period, Mahane Yehuda Market has undergone many changes over the years. Today, it is a blend of old and new, both a traditional market and a great tourist attraction with its restaurants, bars, evening musical events and street shows.

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On the obverse, to the left, stalls, stallholders and shoppers represent the traditional market, to the right, people sitting and talking by a bar table represent the restaurants and bars. Above left in the background is the Tower of David, symbolizing Jerusalem and the unique Jerusalemite atmosphere.

Above center is an artistic element symbolizing the sun and crescent moon within it, which represents the bustling life in the market from morning to night. In the upper area is the face value and mint year in Hebrew and English and Star of David mintmark.

Around the border is the word “Jerusalem” in English, Hebrew and Arabic with the metal fineness and weight, “1 oz. fine gold .9999” in Hebrew and English.

The reverse is common in the series depicting the Lion of Megiddo with its stylized curved tail, taken from an ancient 8th century BCE seal excavated in Megiddo (Armageddon) in the Jordan Valley, that belonged to Shema, servant of King Jeroboam II. Above the lion is the Israel State Emblem and below it, “Israel” in English, Hebrew and Arabic.

The coin was designed by Meir Eshel. 𐤇

## LETTERS BEYOND TAV

by Simcha Kuritzky, NLG

As a child fan of Dr. Seuss, I had high expectations for his book *On Beyond Zebra*, which, unfortunately, were not met. Even at age eight or so, I knew there were many sounds for which no English letters existed and thought Seuss would address this. But alas, he only created superfluous syllabaries which were useful only as a shorthand for the names of fictitious animals. Hebrew, however, does have extra letters few Jews outside of the Middle East know about. Most of them come from Judeo-Arabic and present sounds that don't exist in modern Hebrew. These are used mostly for names of people and places. To create a letter for a new sound, Hebrew adds a *geresh* or apostrophe after a letter that has a similar sound. The three most common of these special letters appear on Israeli coins.



The first coin to use a special letter commemorated the centennial of Ze'ev Jabotinsky's birth. Now, the Roman letter J can be pronounced a number of different ways. In English, we usually pronounce "J" as a soft "g" as in "forge," while Germanic languages pronounce it as an English "Y" as in

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“jahr” (year). However, we know Jabotinsky used the French pronunciation like the “s” in “leisure” because the 1980 25- and 500-shekel coins commemorating him spell his name ז'בוטינסקי with the special *zhayin* letter.



The second set of coins were the 1986 1- and 2- new shekel Hanukkah commemoratives with the inscription חנוכה מאלג'יר Hanukkah lamp from Algier, *Continued* or spelled using a ג' or *jimel*. It's possible that ancient Hebrew pronunciation for a *jimel* without a *dagesh* was similar.



*Continued*

In 1990, the last Hanukkah lamp commemorative 1- and 2- new shekels showed a lamp מקוצ'ין from Cochin, India. The “ch” in Cochin is represented by a צ' or *chade*.

While generally not collectible, Israel street signs often show these special letters.



Visitors to Jerusalem frequently see the *jimel* (two of them!) on King George Street. Note that the Arabic uses their regular *jime* letter for the King's name (the letters with one dot below). There are other special letters that don't appear on any collectibles I could find. The special *khaf* ח appears on this sign for Al Khattab. The *khaf* originally was pronounced differently from the *khaf* כ, and in Arabic it still is. The original pronunciation is now *Continued* by a *khaf geresb*.



Two less frequently seen letters are the *thav* and *dhalet*. The ת *thav* has the original sound of the *tav* without a *dagesh*, but now it's written as a *tav* with a *geresh*. This is the unvoiced th in English, which used to be written as the letter P thorn. On the street sign shown here, *thav* is used in the name Luther. Note that regular Arabic has the letter *they* with this sound (it's the one with three dots above). The ד *dhalet* is the voiced version as in the English word

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then, which used to be written with an Ð eth. I couldn't find any photos that used that letter, but there is an equivalent Arabic letter and modern Greek uses that pronunciation for Δ *della*.

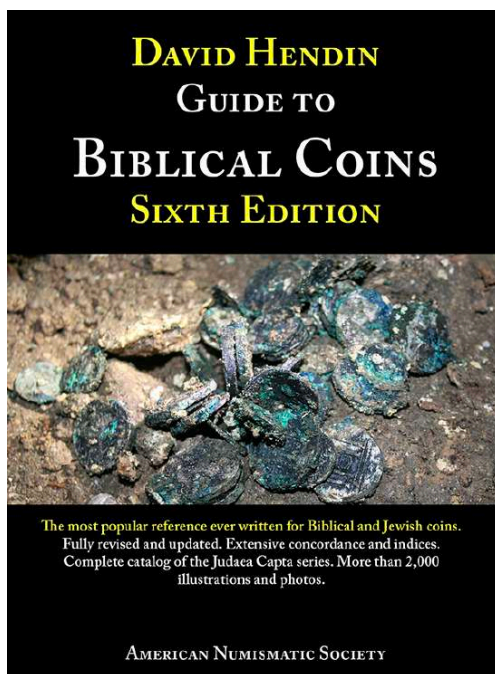


To add to the confusion, a *gersh* can also be used to indicate an abbreviation, as on the Priestly Blessing medal where a *heh gersh* is used to stand for *HaShem* or the Tetragrammaton; or as a sign that the letters are being used as numerals (known as *gematria*, most often used with dates, such as on the 1967 Six Days War commemorative coin). ▮

## A HALF CENTURY OF STUDYING BIBLICAL COINS

by David Hendin

Many people are interested in ancient coins, but not too many stay with it for over half a century! After nearly 50 years of writing and revising, and on the eve of publication of my book *Guide to Biblical Coins 6th Edition*, I can assure readers that the process of creation and revision of a book like this is not a straightforward process. This is true even though texts on the topic have existed for nearly 200 years.



*Continued*



Image from *Guide to Biblical Coins* showing an actual pomegranate bud superimposed on the same motif, illustrating the design of a silver shekel of the Jewish War (66-70 CE). Credit: *Guide to Biblical Coins* 6th Edition

Take for example the problem of dating coins; despite the fact that some coins actually come with dates, it is not always clear what those dates refer to. For example, in his 1881 *Coins of the Jews*, numismatist Frederick Madden attributed the silver coins inscribed “shekel of Israel,” “half a shekel,” and the bronze shekel fractions dated *year four* to Simon Thassi (died 135 BCE) of the Hasmonean dynasty. Madden also attributed coins with the names Eleazar and Simon to the first year of the Jewish War against Rome (66-70 CE). Today Eleazar and Simon are known to be Bar Kokhba coins, issued by the Judean state during its final revolt against Rome from 132-135 CE.

The issue of dating gets predictably more difficult with earlier coinage. My friend and teacher, the late Ya’akov Meshorer (Chief Curator of Archaeology at the Israel Museum) correctly dated all of the Jewish War and Bar Kokhba Revolt coins in his 1967 *Jewish Coins of the Second Temple Period*. But Meshorer shook up the establishment by theorizing that Alexander Jannaeus (who reigned from 104-76 BCE) struck the first Hasmonean coins.

*Continued*



Coin of Alexander Jannaeus (103 to 76 BCE). Obverse: Seleucid anchor and Greek Legend: BASILEOS ALEXANDROU "King Alexander". Reverse: Eight-spoke wheel or starburst within diadem. Hebrew legend inside the spokes: "Yehonatan Hamelech" (Yehonatan the King).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasmonean\\_coinage#/media/File:JanaeusCoinPhoto.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hasmonean_coinage#/media/File:JanaeusCoinPhoto.jpg) CC BY-SA 3.0

He further posited that Jannaeus issues were followed by coins struck by subsequent Hasmonean kings, Hyrcanus II, Aristobulus II, and Mattatayah Antigonus (the last king of the dynasty, executed by the Romans in 37 BCE after being captured and handed over by Herod, who had already been proclaimed "King" by the Romans).

But Meshorer's theory was quickly countered by Arie Kindler (of the Haaretz Museum and Tel Aviv University) who wrote in *Coins of the Land of Israel* in 1974 that the Hasmoneans struck coins in this order: Hyrcanus I, Aristobulus I, Jannaeus, Hyrcanus II, and Mattathias Antigonus. The problem is that coins with the name Yehochanan (or John) could refer to Hyrcanus I (135-104 BCE) or to his grandson Hyrcanus II who reigned some 40 years later. This meant uncertainty regarding sites or strata dated by such coins.

In 1976 this writer entered the fray with the first edition of *Guide to Ancient Jewish Coins*. Like Kindler, I also highlighted the find of a coin struck by the Syrian king Antiochus VII in Jerusalem bearing both a date and a Judean

*Continued*

symbol as a chronological anchor. But I still followed Meshorer's then current theory of Hasmonean coin chronology (only until my 3rd edition).

The revisions continue. *Guide to Ancient Jewish Coins* was retitled *Guide to Biblical Coins* for subsequent editions 2nd (1987), 3rd (1996), 4th (2001), and 5th (2010). This fall the 6th edition will be published by the American Numismatic Society (ANS). I am happy to have gifted all rights and revenues for this book to the ANS.

I am often asked "why" or "when" I do a "new" edition. A father of my boyhood friends was a genetics professor who was working furiously on a new edition of his textbook when I arrived in New York in 1969. Innocently, I asked him the difference between editions. He did not hesitate: "They are pretty much the same, except better." Coins continue to be found, and to confound.

Why have I re-done it six times and what did I do differently this time? What have I learned in the process and how do I feel about writing a book for both scholars and collectors, especially given the current climate regarding collecting?

Over the decades I have updated my book to include the most recent research, including from over 75 papers I have written or co-written with colleagues. My archaeological fieldwork at Sepphoris with Duke University and Hebrew University dramatically enhanced knowledge, as have my site visits to hundreds of locations in Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon with friends and colleagues.

*Continued*



David Hendin with an ancient depiction of Cereberus at the Sidonian Cave in Marisha, Israel. Credit: R. Hendin.



Hendin excavating at Sepphoris in 2011.

During the decades I have worked on this book, the entire field of Samaritan numismatics sprang forth. Almost all of the Samaritan coins surfaced as a few hoards presented in the market and were rounded up and published by Meshorer and Shraga Qedar, a professional numismatist. When I entered the field in 1967 Samaritan coins were not known. By *Samaritan Coinage* (1999), their second book on the topic, Meshorer and Qedar published 224 different types of Samaritan Coins and more types have been subsequently discovered.



*Continued*



Samarian Silver coin. Head of bearded satrap left, wearing tiara. Persian king standing left, fighting horned creature. © The Trustees of the British Museum

Similarly, the number of Yehud coin types, from the Persian and early Hellenistic period and bearing the name *YHD* in Aramaic, has increased from three to more than 30 over the decades. Again, most (perhaps all) of the new types first appeared in the markets. Dating of the Jewish War and Bar Kokhba Revolt coins has also been supported and reconfirmed by well-documented archaeological contexts. Ideas about the dating and mint locations for the coins of Agrippa II are subjects of ongoing study.

*Continued*



YHD coin.

In addition to adding new types, removing incorrectly attributed coins, and refining chronology (seriation) of the coins, I have also added new topics of interest. For example, in the 4th edition I added a section covering and listing coins countermarked by the Roman legions stationed in the ancient Holy Land. In the 5th edition, I added text and an extensive catalog of the Judaea Capta coins, issued by the Emperor Vespasian to celebrate his son Titus' destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

Unlike most archaeological objects of daily use, coins were literally mass produced in order to travel. Coins have been collected, saved, lost, and found for thousands of years. Millions of ancient coins are legally in collections or in trade worldwide. Unlike temples, frescoes, and tombstones, among other ancient objects, coins were made to circulate. They were intended to cross borders between friend and foe alike and facilitate international trade.

A half a century ago, many scholars still viewed Judean coinage as a group unto itself, closely adhering to Jewish law with regard to legends and imagery. But new analyses of coin styles and technologies have shown this to be far from the case. The influence of the Hellenistic minting tradition has been increasingly recognized. Irregular bronze and silver coinage of

*Continued*

Judaea – crude versions of already crudely made coins – were once ignored and attributed to careless manufacturing. Metallurgical and die studies, however, have shown it is likely that these irregular coins were issued sporadically and at different locations to fill market needs, and were not considered “forgeries” when they were made and used. A better understanding of economics has resulted.

Metallurgy studies have helped refine the seriation for the coins of Herod I, placing them into a large pattern of Judean bronze coins. Over time the bronze source moved from Cypriot sources to the Timna mines, north of Eilat. Arsenic is an incidental trace element in copper, but there is more arsenic in copper from Cyprus than in copper from Timna. As metal sources for Judean coins changed from Cyprus to Timna during the Second Temple Period, we observed steadily reduced amounts of arsenic over time in those coins. Trade and technology have thus come into better focus.

The debate about cultural heritage must continue and both archaeologists and numismatists (who are, increasingly, trained as archaeologists or historians) will no doubt participate productively. Both parties must recognize their common interests. I hope that the thousands of years of responsible coin collecting traditions can become increasingly compatible with the interests of archaeology and anthropology.

Numismatics is an important ancillary field to archaeology, anthropology, history, mathematics, and economics. Yet few universities worldwide offer numismatic tracks. Top academic numismatists may be professors, but they are often diplomats, attorneys, doctors, businessmen, writers, clergymen, or even coin dealers. As noted by Frank L. Holt in his engaging *When Money Talks: A History of Coins and Numismatics*, the scholarly societies that publish the journals “still welcome collectors and dealers as members and officers. Their research journals still accept papers written by well-informed non-academics, and their own cabinets still rely heavily on bequests from generous collectors and dealers.”

*Continued*

But it is my clear position that every international law should be followed. (I also urge responsible citizens of all source countries to take a closer, clear-eyed look at England's Portable Antiquities Scheme.) Over my six-plus decades in numismatics I have collaborated with collectors, dealers, scholars, law enforcement officers, and even a few who some would have called scoundrels. Students of numismatics must remain sensitive to the changing parameters of how these fields have actually operated over the past few hundred years.

I take my work as a numismatic historian and guardian of an archive information seriously, and I do my best to bring a two-thousand-year tradition of collecting and studying Judean coins up to date with current ideas as well as stories about some of the key players over the past 50 years. The newest edition has more reference citations, more endnotes and comments, many more photos and illustrations, and better indices and a concordance. But in addition to numismatics and archaeology, my career has been as a journalist, publisher, and literary agent. In the latest edition, I talk about my friendship with Charles M. Schulz, creator of PEANUTS, and how his interest in my numismatic and archaeological work in Israel turned into an adventure for Snoopy's twin brother, Spike.

The goal of *Guide to Biblical Coins* has been to inform scholars and collectors who seek an overview of the coins of the Second Temple Period, which also played a critical role in the formation and evolution of Christianity. This work will continue.

*David Hendin is the Vice President of the American Numismatic Society, which is the publisher of his sixth edition. The ANS has arranged that, for the next 12 months, AINA members can purchase the 6th edition of Guide to Biblical Coins by using the discount code HENDIN30 during their checkout at <https://www.oxbowbooks.com/dbbc/guide-to-biblical-coins.html>. The regular price is \$90, but just \$63 for AINA members.*

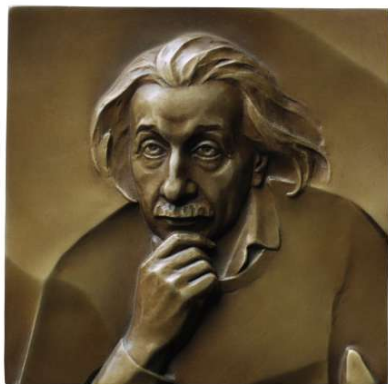
*Additionally, it should be noted that David Hendin's article "Tempest Over a 'Cheater's Weight'" that was printed in the previous issue of the Shekel was reprinted courtesy of [www.coinweek.com](http://www.coinweek.com). 📖*

MEL WACKS JUDAICA ART MEDAL AWARD  
ANNOUNCED AT FIDEM TOKYO 2020-2021



At FIDEM Tokyo 2020-2021, the biennial Congress of the International Art Medal Federation, two medalists were chosen to share the Mel Wacks Judaica Art Medal Award, for Judaic, Biblical or Holy Land themes — Ewa Olszewska-Borys of Poland and Romualdas Inčirauskas of Lithuania. Each will receive an engraved silver medal, courtesy of the Jewish-American Hall of Fame, and will share the \$250 prize money, presented by the Cincinnati Skirball Museum, home of the Jewish-American Hall of Fame Medal Collection. Wacks founded the Jewish-American Hall of Fame in 1969, and has served as its director since then.


Ewa Olszewska-Borys' medal, titled  $E=mc^2$ , is described in the catalog as: "Albert Einstein predicted gravity waves first observed in 2015. The reverse of the medal shows the fusion of two black holes and the gravity waves this generates." The large (127 x 130 mm) rectangular cast bronze medal features a thoughtful Einstein in Ewa's dramatic personal style combining incused and raised surfaces.



*Continued*

The other winning medal, by Romualdas Incirauskas, portrays Chiune Sugihara. It is also rectangular, measuring 150 x 150 mm, and described in the catalog as: “Dedicated to Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara (1900-1986), who lived in Lithuania, in Kaunas, from 1939-1940. During World War II, he saved about 6,000 Jews from Lithuania, Poland and Germany by issuing them with Japanese transit visas. The medal is dedicated to [his] 120<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary. The symbols on the reverse convey the tragedy of the Jewish people.” The reverse depicts a large Star of David intertwined with scenes of Jewish victims behind barbed wire fences of the death camps, with inscriptions: “6000 lives” and a quote from Matthew 5:6-10, ending with “*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*”



Collectors can contact these medalists for availability and pricing information at [eob@wp.pl](mailto:eob@wp.pl) and [incirauskas@gmail.com](mailto:incirauskas@gmail.com). For further information about the Jewish-American Hall of Fame, visit [www.amuseum.org/jahf](http://www.amuseum.org/jahf). 

## ISRAELI CAMPER UNEARTHS STASH OF ANCIENT COINS

*Courtesy of [www.netnews.com](http://www.netnews.com)*

Yotam Dahan was out camping Tuesday night with his family on Neveh Yam beach near the northern coastal town of Atlit when he suddenly spotted something sparkling in the sand behind their tent. It turned out to be a 13-pound lump of coins from about 1,700 years ago which archeologists speculate belonged to a merchant ship that wrecked ashore.



Yotam Dayan showcasing a nugget of ancient coins he has found while out camping with his family. (Photo: Ofir Hayat)

Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) Archaeologist Karem Said contacted Dahan following his post and the two arranged to meet at the place of the discovery the next morning.

Dr. Donald Zvi-Ariel, a coin expert for the IAA, estimated the doubloons are from the beginning of the 4th century CE. The coins were crusted together after spending almost two millennia in salty seawater.

Said thanked Dahan for showing good citizenship and awarded him with a certificate of appreciation. Saying: "Handing such findings over to the



*Continued*

national collection helps us, the archaeologists, complete more parts of the puzzle that is the history of the Land of Israel."



Photo: Ofir Hayat

According to Jacob Sharvit, director of the IAA's Marine Archaeology Unit, the site of the discovery neighbors countless other archeological sites that indicate human activity in the area ranging back to the Neolithic period about 9,000 years ago.

There was also evidence of extensive maritime activity in the area starting the Middle Bronze Age some 4,000 years ago. The rising and falling tides of the coastline have slowly created a natural mooring that served as a shelter for vessels that anchored there for the night or took refuge from a storm. Archaeological evidence left in the area often indicates that people were caught in troubled waters, and their ship was wrecked ashore along with the cargo that was on board.



*Continued*



Photo: Ofir Hayat

Sharvit further noted that "the large ball of coins and the remnants of cloth left on it indicate that they were kept in a bag and clustered together, taking the shape of the bag as the metal oxidized in the marine environment. Given the large number of coins, it appears that the coins belonged to a ship and were used for trade."

Near the site of Dahan's discovery, IAA archeological surveys found parts of cargo belonging to a ship from the end of the Roman period, which included anchors and pottery. 📖

## REFLECTIONS ON COLLECTING ISRAELI AND JEWISH NUMISMATICS FOR 50 YEARS, PART I

by Aaron Oppenheim

I got a call from the *Shekel's* editor, Chaya Sara Oppenheim, requesting an article for this coming issue. "Can you come up with something?" she asked. How can I refuse such a request, from my daughter, no less? I began to contemplate interesting content ideas for AINA's readership without recycling previously published articles. We finally decided on a new concept: sharing my personal history and reflections on the hobby from the perspective of someone involved for more than half a century. Here is the first installment.

It is impossible to begin my story without mention of the profound guidance of my late grandfather, Maurice Frankenhuis, who was one of the AINA founders and on the first AINA Board in 1967. The DNA for my collecting passion unquestionably comes from my grandfather. (It is not unusual to skip a generation, as I have learned from speaking with other collectors). A renowned collector in the Netherlands in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he amassed the largest personal collection of World War I medals, the basis of the catalog he authored in 1919. As a citizen of Holland, a neutral country, he was able to procure medals from all the belligerent countries. Ultimately, portions of the collection were exchanged for a permit to stay in England for business. The medals were "deemed of value" to the country as the British Museum couldn't buy such medals on their own.

Eventually, he donated the bulk of the WWI collection to the nascent Kadman Numismatic Museum at the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv, Israel in 1961. He viewed this as the right opportunity to entrust his collection as an educational tool, connecting his personal experiences as an observer of World War I and subsequently a survivor of the concentration camps in World War II, with that of the new Jewish State.

*Continued*



Kadman Numismatic Museum, Eretz Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel 2014  
Centennial Exhibit opening of Frankenhuis War Medals of World War I

### **My Earliest Collecting Recollections**

When I was a young child my grandfather presented me with a beautiful and colorful stamp collection of birds. The next time we met, I proudly showed him how carefully I had taken scissors and “straightened out all the jagged edges” of the stamps! Well, that was the end of stamp collecting for me. Coins and medals gave him new hope that I still had a future in the hobby of collecting. He educated and encouraged me in the world of collecting. He trained me to develop the necessary skills to identify, learn the history, and properly care for building a collection of my own.

He also developed the personal connections that would prove to be valuable for years to come. Correspondence with his peers always included his grandson as a focal point. Exhibits were curated with my participation and credited with my name—starting when I was 8 years old! He guided me to compose letters to prominent individuals and type them myself on a typewriter, to gain confidence and share the enjoyment of the hobby to the fullest.

*Continued*

In 1962, the Harry Truman Presidential Library in St. Louis Missouri was burglarized, and a collection of 450 coins of the United States Presidents was stolen. These coins were originally the personal collection of John Snyder, the Secretary of Treasury. It was decided to replace them with a smaller group by appealing to the public to help contribute to the purchase of select coins with the help of the Stacks family coin dealership. My grandfather eagerly joined a group of 167 coin collectors and donated a \$20 Double Eagle to the collection replacement project. A donation was made in my (and my brother's) names.

In appreciation of “our” contribution, we each received a letter of gratitude and a \$1 currency bill autographed by John Snyder. While other children my age were still being toilet trained, I was already being trained in philanthropy. In 1974, my brother and I donated the nearly 5,000 posters of the Frankenhuis Collection World War I Poster Collection to Columbia University Rare Books & Manuscript Library.

### **Influencers and Inspirators**

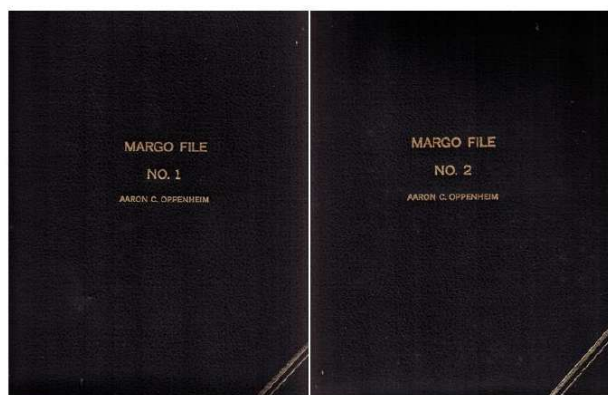
Undoubtedly it was grandfather's zeal, wisdom and experience as a collector which he invested in developing my own collecting interests. He instructed me with the nuances of coin grading and minting processes at an early age, teaching me about the history of events depicted on coins and medals, the lessons that can be drawn from the persons, places or circumstances that were captured on numismatic material. I've selected a few of the people whose names are well known, and were pivotal in my personal education, with a focus on some who were instrumental in the foundations of Israel numismatics.

### **Margo Russell – Editor of Coin World**

One of the key tools my grandfather taught me was to collect data about collecting in order to document and organize information and correspondence. Since he had authored many articles of his activities

*Continued*

related to numismatics in the popular weekly newspaper *Coin World*, a great rapport was established with its editor, Mrs. Margo Russell. She served for 23 years as the publication's first editor when it was founded in 1960.



MARGO FILE binders to preserve correspondence, newspaper articles, and photos.

My grandfather created a special binder for me with sleeved pages to preserve all the letters, articles, photographs and documents pertinent to my collecting interests, and correspondence. On the cover of the binder was embossed in gold letters: “MARGO FILE NO.1” with my name below.

I was already on a first name basis with Mrs. Margo Russell, so it made perfect sense to call it simply by her first name. In the course of her tenure, we exchanged dozens of letters. She helped cultivate my interest in numismatics by sending me books, coins, medals and tokens. She autographed and sent me the 1970 Red Book of U.S. coins, and even signed me up for membership with the American Numismatic Association. Over time she knew my entire family quite well through my grandfather, and we enjoyed a special visit from her to my grandfather's apartment in Manhattan. I remember cutting out various pictures of coins from the *Coin World* newspaper to paste onto the foyer mirror, an arrangement by my grandfather to welcome her.

*Continued*



"Welcome Mrs. Margo from Ronnie" display in 1966

As I grew older, Margo introduced me to other collectors my age, and renowned persons in the field of numismatics. All the letters of correspondence would then be inserted into my Margo File. When the binder was filled to a maximum, another binder was prepared, this time embossed "MARGO FILE NO. 2". These documents are a wonderful testament to the personal attention given by many artists, collectors, professional numismatists, and other persons of prominence. Margo took a great interest in my formative years, keeping in touch regularly on her letterhead stationery, and sending me mementos from some of her coin show visits.

Continued

**Coin World**  
THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE ENTIRE NUMISMATIC FIELD  
SIDNEY NEWS BUILDING PH. 513 492-4141 SIDNEY, OHIO 45365

December 19, 1966

Mr. Ronnie Oppenheim  
66 Overlook Terrace  
New York, New York 10040

Dearest Ronnie,

If there were 1,000,000 boys standing in one line, all of them wearing the same kind of hat, same kind of jacket, same kind of shirt, same kind of shoes, and someone said to me:

"Mrs. Margo, please pick out the boy you would most like to have at your house. . ."

Do you know which boy I would pick?

A boy by the name of Ronnie Oppenheim!

Next time we must have more time to visit and play with coins! Do you know, I can still shut my eyes and see the beautiful coin and medal display in the foyer of your Grandfather and Grandmother Frankenhuis' home. The sign, "Welcome, Mrs. Margo," almost made me cry--with happiness. So did all the coins you worked so hard to carefully cut from Coin World.

You are a talented boy. Your mother will tell you what talented means, if you don't know. Your mother is an extremely nice person. Tell her each time I wear my coat I think of her, helping me in the dark, at the Israeli movies. And I was trying to slip out without causing any trouble!

Keep up the good work in school--I looked at your books, remember? I saw you are careful with your school work, too.

Please give my love to your grandparents when you see them. And here's a brand new coin of Israel for you.

Love,

*"Aunt" Margo*

dmr  
Enc.

One of many letters received from Margo Russell, Editor of *Coin World*

*Continued*

### **Archaeologist Prof. Yaakov Meshorer**

It was in 1974 when Margo informed me that Yaakov Meshorer, the Chief Curator of the Israel Museum was spending his sabbatical year in the United States.

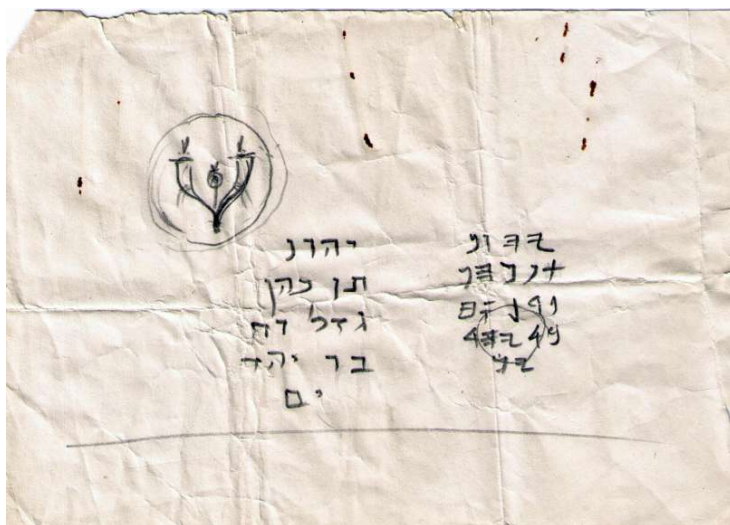
Dr. Meshorer was regarded as the preeminent numismatic authority on ancient Jewish coinage, and with a little name dropping, he agreed to my invitation to come and give a lecture at my parent's home. My parents had a circle of friends who were students of history including some collectors of archaeological artifacts of ancient Israel. Dr. Meshorer arrived early for his presentation, and so I had a one-on-one opportunity to share with him my collection.

At the time, my collection had not yet expanded to the ancients, but I had a few coins. I pulled out one from its standard paper envelope, a small bronze coin which I knew was a prutah from the period of the Hasmonean dynasty, but I knew nothing more about it. Although a common coin, the coin was not of good quality, the inscription was indiscernible, and I was hoping he would be able to assist in identifying and teaching me more information about it.

He asked me for a pencil and paper, and to my amazement began to write out the Paleo-Hebrew letters that were on this coin, circling those letters that were still visible to the eye. He proceeded to translate the legend and gave me the historical information about the coin. I thought to myself, this is an expert!



*Continued*



Prutah of Hasmonean Ruler Alexander Jannaeus (Yehonatan/Yannai) 103-76 BCE deciphered "Yehonatan the High Priest and the Council of the Jews" in Paleo-Hebrew by Y. Meshorer

Continued

To Roni Oppenheim with best wishes. Yaakov Meshorer  
N.Y. Dec. 14, 74.

## The Mint of King Herod The Great?

by Yaakov Meshorer



Recently two soft limestone tablets were uncovered in excavations in Samaria\*, once a Roman colony where coins were minted. Their specifications follow:

### Tablet No. 1

thickness: .....29 mm (1.14 in)  
width: .....160 mm (6.30 in)  
maximum length: .....154 mm (6.06 in)  
minimum length: .....60 mm (2.36 in)  
diameter of moulds: .....14 mm (0.55 in)

Unfortunately, it is impossible to establish the exact length or width of this tablet. It was found broken on both sides and what is left are five rows of moulds for minting coins. One of the rows, close to the broken edge is obviously incomplete. This item seems to be the end part of the entire mould form. The first row, broken lengthwise consists of 6 half moulds. The second row consists of 9 full moulds. The third row consists of 7 full moulds and over half of the 8th. The fourth row consists of 5 full moulds and one-fourth of the 6th. The fifth row consists of 4 complete moulds and a partial fifth one.

### Tablet No. 2

thickness: .....39 mm (1.54 in)  
width: .....206 mm (8.11 in)  
maximum length: .....78 mm (3.07 in)  
minimum length: .....60 mm (2.36 in)  
diameter of moulds: .....13 mm (0.51 in)

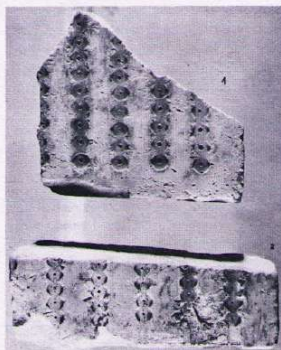
This tablet, wider than Tablet No. 1 is also incomplete, broken on both sides. However, this one is a section of the upper part of the entire mould form. One can clearly note the canals carved in the stone forming openings at the top of each row of moulds. Six

\*Samaria is located 35 miles north of Jerusalem in the central part of Israel.

rows of moulds can be seen in this tablet. The first row is broken lengthwise. The last three rows consist of 4 moulds each; the remaining two rows consist of 5 moulds each.

The two stone tablets, basic to the minting of coins, were uncovered while cleaning floors of structures close to the Samaria city gate, on its southeast side. Most of the ceramic material unearthed at the same layer was found to date from the first century B.C. and the first century A.D. (The proximity of the finding to the city gate reaffirms the assumption that these stone tablets were found close to their original location, since in ancient times the city gate area served as the financial center.)

This type of a mould form was covered and tightened by another of the exact size which had a smooth form. The liquid bronze was poured in



I requested Yaakov Meshorer sign an article that he authored for Shekel magazine  
To be continued...☐

## 2021 Jewish-American Hall of Fame Medals Honor Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, the Creators of Superman

by Mel Wacks NLG

The limited-edition art medals issued annually by The Jewish-American Hall of Fame, since 1969, is now the longest continuing series of art medals being issued in America. The 2021 medals feature Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, the creators of Superman, the first comic book super-hero.



The high relief 2-inch, 3 oz. art medals have been designed by renowned sculptor Eugene Daub (obverse) and Mel Wacks, Director of the Jewish-American Hall of Fame (reverse). They have been produced by The Highland Mint in small quantities limited to 150 bronze, 75 pure silver and 35 gold-plated pure silver. Each medal has a serial number on the edge and is accompanied by a certificate of authenticity. These are offered on a first come-first served basis for \$50, \$200 and \$250, respectively. Mention that you read about this in *The Shekel* and you can get a 20% discount. You can order by calling 818-225-1348.

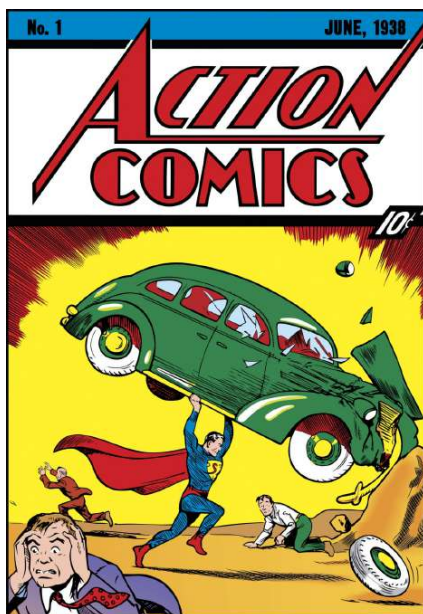
Jerry Siegel was born on October 17, 1914, in Cleveland, Ohio; his parents were Jewish immigrants who had fled antisemitism in their native Lithuania in 1900. Joe Shuster was born in Toronto on July 10, 1914; his father was

*Continued*

from Rotterdam and his mother had come from Kiev. The family moved to Cleveland in 1924, where he became friends with Siegel in high school. They shared a love of science fiction, adventure fiction, and movies.

After developing the comic strip characters of Superman, Clark Kent, Lois Lane, etc., Siegel and Shuster began a 6-year quest to find a publisher. Eventually they sold their concept to DC comics for just \$130. Superman began as one of several anthology features in the National Periodical Publications *Action Comics* #1 in June 1938. In 2021, a nearly pristine copy of this comic book sold for over 3 million dollars! Superman proved so popular that National launched his own self-titled comic book, the first for any superhero, premiering in the summer of 1939. And the rest is history.

Further information about the more than 50 honorees in the Jewish-American Hall of Fame can be found on their award-winning website [www.amuseum.org/jahf](http://www.amuseum.org/jahf). 📖



## NEW SILVER BULLION COIN: MAMILLA BOULEVARD

7<sup>th</sup> in “Views of Jerusalem” Series

*Courtesy of en.israelmint.com*



The historical Mamilla neighborhood was one of the first to be built outside the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem at the end of the 19th century. In its early years, Mamilla was a prosperous neighborhood for both Jewish and Arab tradesmen.

Designed by architect Moshe Safdie, the exceptional building project took about 30 years to complete. The new Mamilla neighborhood includes a prestigious residential area, luxury hotels and a unique shopping mall built along the main road that leads directly to Jaffa Gate, known as the "Mamilla Boulevard". From the Boulevard, there is a beautiful view of the Tower of David and Old City, especially when illuminated at night.

The face feature Mamilla Boulevard overlooking the Old City and the Tower of David with “Mamilla Boulevard” inscribed in Hebrew and English. The reverse features the Lion of Jerusalem and prominent buildings of Jerusalem, within the outline of a coat of arms, the Holy Land Mint trademark. ♪



## ARCHEOLOGISTS EXCAVATE HOARD OF RARE SILVER COINS

*Courtesy of Heritagedaily.com*



Image Credit: Assaf Peretz - Israel Antiquities Authority

Archaeologists from the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) have excavated a hoard of silver coins from the Hasmonaean period in Modiin-Maccabim-Reut, Israel.

The researchers were excavating an agricultural estate, where they discovered a rock crevice containing the concealed hoard consisting of shekel and half-shekel silver coins (tetradrachms and didrachms).

The coins, which were minted in ancient Tyre in present-day Lebanon depict king Antiochus VII, also known as Antiochus the Pious, who ruled

*Continued*

the Hellenistic Seleucid Empire – or they may depict his brother Demetrius II.

Avraham Tendler of the Israel Antiquities Authority said: “The cache is compelling evidence that the owners of the estate saved income for months, eventually leaving the house for some unknown reason. They collected the money in hopes to come back and collect it, but unfortunately never returned. It is exciting to think that the coin hoard was waiting here for more than 2,000 years until we exposed it”.



Image Credit: Assaf Peretz – Israel Antiquities Authority

*Continued*

The team also discovered many bronze coins minted by Hasmonean rulers that mentions the names; John, Judah, Jonathan, and Matthias – and their title as High Priest and head of the Jewish community.

The discovery of coins in situ stamped with the date “Year Two” of the revolt and the slogan “Freedom of Zion” suggests that the inhabitants of the estate were supporters and possibly participants in the first Jewish Revolt against the Romans in 66 CE.


Avraham Tendler said: “During the excavation, we can see that just before the uprising the estate inhabitants filled up rooms near the perimeter of the building with large stones to create a fortified barrier. In addition, we discovered hiding caves hewn into the bedrock beneath the floors. These complexes were interconnected through a series of tunnels, water cisterns, storage pits, and hidden rooms. In one of the adjacent excavation areas, an impressive miqwe was exposed – within an opening inside leading to an extensive hiding complex containing numerous artifacts dating to the Bar Kokhba Revolt”. 



Image Credit: Assaf Peretz – Israel Antiquities Authority



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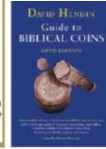


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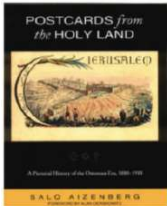
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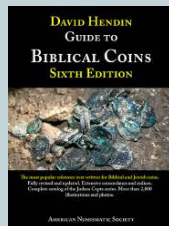
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